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A

DISCOURSE

About the Charge of

NOVELTY

Upon the Reformed

Church of England,

Made by the

PAPISTS

Asking of us the Question,

Where was our Religion before *LUTHER?*

LONDON:

Printed for *R. H.* and *F. G.* and are to be Sold by *Abel Swalle* at the *Unicorn* in St. *Pauls* Church-yard. 1685.

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A DISCOURSE About the Charge of NOVELTY Upon the Reformed Church of *England* made by the *Papists, &c.*

THe Christian Doctrin was once, by the way of trust, delivered by Christ and his Apostles unto the Saints, Men of Care and Honesty, and who should preserve it in its first purity and Spiritual intention, only to prescribe methods unto Men by Faith, and an Honest Conversation, how they might arrive at Heaven; that this Religion might make a deeper impression upon their minds and memories and be more faithfully kept, it was set down in plain and *significant Terms, and reduced into short summaries called a Form of sound Words, that good thing, that Form of Doctrin, a* depositum, *or trust, and by the Church afterwards a Creed.* That it might be believed and valued, it was in its own Nature of the greatest importance, confirmed with variety of the best of arguments,

2 Tim. 1. 13, 14. Rom. 6. 17. 1 Tim. 6. 20.

miracles, prophecies, innocent carriage, and Death of its numerous Disciples, and severe Curses denounc't against any that should add to or take from it, till their great Master, and its Author, Jesus should come from Heaven again. Yet notwithstanding all this, by the Malice and Subtilty of the Devil, the Designs and Passions of Men, the Ignorance and Negligence of some, the Cunning and Industry of others, this plain and simple Religion began by degrees to be Corrupted by the mixtures of Philosophy, and niceness, by the Rules of State Craft and Policy, by idle Traditions, and Inventions, by the Melancholy of some, and the gayety of others; and the natural Face of it was so strangely changed that it seem'd another Gospel, and you might seek Christianity in the Christian World and yet scarce find it. Many Kingdoms and People were to blame in this, being Treacherous to their Master, and false to their trust, suffering so Pure and Chast a Religion to be Corrupted or Stolen away, but the Church of *Rome* seems the most Guilty of them all, (especially upon her own grounds, her Bishop being the Infallible Vicar of Jesus, to whom are committed the Oracles of God) once indeed renowned for her Faith and Pious Governours, but now as famous for their Degeneracy as well in Religion as in their lives. Whose Ambition or Interest prostituted the Faith to those Designs, and made it Earthly and Sensual, or their Negligence and Stupidity suffered the Enemy in the night of Ignorance to sow the tares, which so grew up, and choakt the Wheat, that Faith was turn'd into Fables and Lyes, Foppery and Superstition were nicknam'd Devotion, Ridiculous Gestures and Habits past for Repentance and Mortification, the Bible was shut up and contemned, and the Legends open'd and praised, Honest and Good Men were butchered, and unknown Persons and Malefactors Canonized,

Gal. 1. 8, 9. Rev. 22. 18.

2 Cor. 11. 2.

Cyp. Epist. Ox. Edit. p. 5, 6. Rom. 18. *Platina vitâ Bon.* 7. p. 159. *vide quæso quantum degeneraverint, &c.*

Canonized, Saints with their Pictures and Reliques were made Rivals to Christ in Mediation and Intercession, Good Works were spoil'd by Merit and Arrogance, or done by way of composition for vices, the fear of Hell was abated by the invention of Purgatory, Christ was fetcht from Glory by the Magick of a Priest and put into a Wafer, or into a more sordid place, riddles and quirks of their Schools were made Articles of Faith, in short, old truths were rooted up, or new errors grafted on them, Power and Profit were Stiled the Church, the Court of *Rome* was brought into the Temple and called the Holy of Holies. Such errours as these in the Christian Faith came from *Rome*, and infected our Ancient British Church (not at first planted by the Labours of the *Romish* Bishops of old, but Corrupted by their later Emissaries) and lasted a long time among us, being supported by Power, twisted with Interest, sutable to the pleasures and vices of Men, incorporated into the Government having put out Mens reason to try and discern between Truth and Error, and at length became Fashionable, Legal, Terrible with Fires and Censures which made us Sick unto Death, absolute almost and beyond recovery. Such was our condition here of Slavery and Ignorance, but it pleased him that dwells between the Golden Candlesticks, to dispel our Darkness and restore the Ancient light of Primitive Christianity. His Wisdom and Goodness improving the passions and inclinations of some in temporal changes and concerns to Spiritual purposes, encouraging the secret groans and desires of others, putting many more upon search and enquiry after Truth, and infusing courage for it, at length came to a resolution of Arguing and Debating the Errors of the *Romish* Faith and manners, of reforming the abuses in Discipline and Devotion and to call back True Christianity again, and

being dispossest of the Spirit of *Rome* which oft tore them and rent them till they foamed again, are now cloth'd and in their Wits once more; upon this account the Friends of *Rome* call us Hereticks, Schismaticks and Innovators, Discharge Censures and Excommunications and Eternal Damnation against us, are full of Wrath and Indignation, and to shew a little Wit in their Anger, *And pretended reason, pertly ask the Question, where was our Religion before* Luther?

Bellarm. Campian. Smith.

This is the common and trite Objection against our Religion, very frequent not only in the Mouths of their more Ordinary Disciples, but also of their more Learned Writers, who (whatever strength they really Fancy may be in the Argument it self) think it a very proper Weapon to attempt the vulgar and the Weak withal, to amuse and dazle the less discerning Eye, at least when backt and set off with the stately names of Infallibility, Succession, Antiquity, and the like; and they tell us roundly our Faith was but yesterday, our Religion is new and upstart, as only *Henry* the Eighths and *Cromwells* contrivance (they may truly say as much as their Treason was *Cecils* Plot.) That our Faith began only in the year 1517. in *Saxony* by one *Martin Luther* an Apostate Fryar, who for the Sake of a faire Nun and other designs renounc't the Ancient Faith, and set up his new Device of Protestantism at *Spires*; which did not quietly last much above seven years, for in the year 1525. starts up *Zuinglius*, and after two years more the Anabaptists, who change and correct *Luther's* Religion, and draw great numbers of his Disciples from him; and himself for his reward dyed a strange Death, great Noises and Crackings were heard in his Tomb, which being opened, neither Body nor Bones were found, and the smell of Brimstone was ready to stifle the standers by. And therefore they say, we ought to look

Bellar. Tom. lib. 4. p. 287.

from

from whence we are faln, to repent of our Hereſy, and return to our firſt Love, and not ſtick ſo cloſe to our Religion, the new invention of ſo ill a Man. That we may therefore keep thoſe firm that are members of our Religion, and bring thoſe back that have revolted from us into the *Romiſh* Communion, we have endeavour'd to give a ſatisfactory Anſwer to this their Queſtion, Where was your Religion before the times of *Luther*? Not to trouble our ſelves with ſuch Legends as theſe, and Uncharitableneſs along with them, the Anſwer is thus.

1. Telling them plainly where our Religion was before *Luthers* time.

2. By ſhewing what errors and miſtakes are included in the Queſtion.

3. To turn the Queſtion upon themſelves, and ask them ſome others of the like Nature.

1. The plain Anſwer to the Queſtion is this: That our Religion was long before the times of *Luther*, and believed and ſetled in many Kingdoms and Nations of the World, and hath neither Novelty nor Singularity in it. 'Tis an old Religion, I am ſure 'tis of Age and can ſpeak for it ſelf. It hath laſted now theſe 1600 years and more, founded at firſt by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, handed down to us through many Sufferings and Perſecutions, and here it is preſerved. It contracted indeed in the coming down a great deal of ruſt by the Falſeneſs and Careleſneſs of its keepers, particularly by the Church of *Rome*, we ſcowr'd off the ruſt, and kept the mettal; that's the *Romiſh* Religion, this is the *Engliſh*. They added Falſe Doctrins to the Chriſtian Faith, we left the one and kept to the other; this is Ancient, thoſe are New. Our Religion is the ſame with that of the Early Chriſtians, Martyrs, and Confeſſors, believed in

in the first 300 years, and defended by all Councils truly General: Our Religion in those first Ages was in *Palestine* and *Greece*, in *Agypt*, in *Antioch* where the Disciples
Acts. 11. 26. were first called Christians and in *Rome* it self, and wherever the great labours of her first Apostles carry'd her to the different and remote Countries of the World: Then and there our Religion liv'd, where *Peter*, *Linus*, and *Cletus*, and all the first and Pious Bishops of *Rome* did. It suffered indeed great variety of changes and conditions, by the interest and Wickedness of men, sometimes more Adulterated, and sometimes more Pure, it flitted from Country to Country, sometimes Greater and sometimes Smaller in its number, sometimes in a Dejected, and sometimes in a more Flourishing State, but somewhere or other it was intire and without mixture, as it was at first given unto the World, and such an old Religion as this we are of, holding fast neither more nor less, neither adding to nor diminishing what Christ and his Apostles taught; and if Antiquity must evidence the Truth of our Religion, we are safe and secure that we have right on our side. And this will appear if we consider these following things.

1. What Conformity our Religion carries to that of Christ and his Apostles. Let any impartial eye compare them both together, and he will find the features and complexion, the whole body of Religion the same in both. Whatever they deliver'd out at first, as Fundamental to Salvation, whatever they Instituted as parts of Devotion, Discipline, and Order, we still faithfully retain in our Church, and if any Truth of moment hitherto by fraud or negligence be concealed from her, she is ready to receive it, whenever it is made plain, not having stopt up the way of Truth by a pretence of Infallibility or want of Modesty to confess an error. She hath the same sense of the Nature,

ture, Offices, the Deſign and whole Undertakings of Chriſt, that the truly Ancient Church had; She receives the Creed and Bible and any Traditions that can be made out to be truly Divine, in the ſame meaning and underſtanding that Chriſt and his Apoſtles gave to the firſt Chriſtians, and they to us. What their thoughts of Saints and Holy Souls departed were, ours are, thoughts of reſpect, remembrance and imitation, not Divine Worſhip. Chriſt Inſtituted proper Figures, and Symbols of Bread and Wine, to repreſent and confirm, to conveigh and commemorate his Bloody Paſſion and Benefits to Mankind, in this ſenſe She preſerves the Inſtitution Sacred, and doth not really Sacrifice or Crucify the Lord of Life again. Chriſt Commanded good Works under the Penalty of Eternal Damnation, She doth the ſame, and in our Maſters Language bids the doers of them call themſelves unprofitable Servants, beating down Pride and Merit. Chriſt and his Apoſtles told the World what departing Souls muſt expect, her ſenſe is the ſame, that there are no ſecond ventures and tryals to be made, neither can a kind Friend with a good eſtate left for Maſſes or Monks compound for a life ill ſpent. Run through the whole Conſtitution of our Church in Articles of Faith, and Rules of manners, you may trace them to Chriſt and his Apoſtles time, and all other parts of Her Government and Order are truly primitive. And it muſt needs be ſo, if She ſincerely follows her Rule of Faith, the Holy Scriptures, ſo Ancient, ſo Divine, and whatever is declared there Eſſential to Salvation She brings into her Creed, and reſolves to keep it, like a mighty treaſure, Faithfully unto Death. And indeed the Church of *Rome* confeſſes that what we do retain is Ancient and Apoſtolical, but pretends, that we are defective in many things, and want ſome neceſſaries which they have, to make an intire Faith. But we challenge them

to

to prove, that those opinions wherein we differ from them were delivered by Christ or any Men Divinely inspired in those times. And they seem to acknowledge we do not, and therefore to make up the matter, pretend a Divine Authority in the Church, to cast new Articles, and Truths *ferè de fide*, almost fit for a Creed, and some others of them confess that some of their Opinions as Image-Worship and others were not maintain'd in the first Ages of Christianity for fear of coming too near the Heathens Worship and out of other Prudential considerations, so that whosoever doth compare the Doctrine of our Church, with that of Christ and his Apostles, must needs conclude that our Religion is Ancient Christianity, and that the charge of Novelty is groundless.

2. The Nature of Reformation, which was not to found a New Church but correct an old one. Christianity that Pearl of great price, was hid with trash and filth, that the *Romish* Church had heapt upon it, our reformers remov'd only what loaded and obscur'd it, and restor'd it to its first Beauty and Lustre. Such a Reformation indeed is later then their errors, and it must needs be so, it naturally supposing them before, otherwise 'tis not Reformation but a Destructive change; but Primitive Christianity which is our Religion was long before the Disease of Popery, though the cure of this Disease was after, or later then the Disease it self, but the sound Body of Christianity for which we are concern'd, was before them both, for 'tis not Reformation barely that we are pleased with al, no more then with a Pill or Potion, but only as necessary to drive away an inveterate Disease, and recover an old Religion to its former Health. When Christ reformed the *Jewish* Religion from the false senses and glosses that the Scribes and Pharisees had put upon it, and grafted Christianity upon the old stock, will the *Ro-*

Mat. 13. 4, 6.

manists

maniſts call this a New Religion or rather an old one well amended and improved by Divine Authority. *Bellarmin* doth allow this for Truth, and ſaith that Chriſtianity was rather a New State and Condition than a new Church, and he that can call our Religion New, becauſe tis mended, and made now, what it was about 1600 years ago, may affirm that Chriſt built a New Temple when he Whipt the buyers and ſellers out of the old: And that *Hezekiah* built a New Sanctuary, and Inſtituted a New Paſſover, becauſe he cleans'd the one and reſtor'd the other to its firſt Inſtitution; our reformation did no more, it only ſcal'd off the Leproſy that ſtuck to the Body of the *Ramiſh* Church, it only par'd off thoſe Additions that Intereſt or Superſtition, Niceneſs or Foppery, had glew'd to it; what after remain'd, was our Religion, the ſame that Chriſt and his Apoſtles taught the World at firſt. And if they can ſhew that any thing hath been added ſince, pernicious to the Nature of the True and Old Religion, our Church is ready to remove it, or that any thing is wanting that is neceſſary to its complement and perfection, ſhe is ready to entertain it with the ſame ſpirit of meekneſs and Wiſdom, and Regard to the Goſpel, that ſhe uſed in the Reformation; but hitherto upon good grounds and ſtrict inquiry She is fully ſatisfied that Her Religion is abſolute and compleat Chriſtianity. 2 Chron. 30.5.

3. We have many and impartial Judges on our ſide, that our Religion is Pure and Old Chriſtianity. The particular Church of *Rome* indeed, that ſupports her ſelf by a pretended Infallibility, to be true to her principle, refuſes to be tryed by any other Church but will be only Judge of her ſelf, and others too; yet we that are certain and ſure of the Truth of our Religion, though not Infallible, dare Appeal to the Judgment of other Chriſtian Churches. The *Greek* Church condemns their

half Communion, the Doctrines of Purgatory, Merit and Supererogation. The Adoration of Images, their locking up the Scriptures in an unknown Tongue, their extream Unction, and sale of Masses, and laughs at their Infallibility, the thing that makes their errors in Faith incorrigible; the *Armenian* Christians reject the Supremacy of the Pope, Transubstantiation, Purgatory, and Excommunicate those that Worship Images. The *Jacobites*, the *Indians* of St. *Thomas*, the *Egyptian* and *Abassine* Christians, dissent from most or all of the *Romish* errors which we condemn. We have all the truly Ancient Christian Churches on our side, and most of the Modern whom the busy Emissaries of *Rome* have not terrified or seduc't into their party; our Writers have Appeal'd with great success to the Ancient Councils, the Holy Fathers, and to the Learned and Pious Bishops and Priests of old, and from thence discover'd the Novelty of the *Romish* Faith and the good old way of the *English* Church. And they dare not stand the trial, when we *desire to be determin'd* by the best and Infallible Judge, *the Holy Scriptures*, except they must give the meaning of them, *otherwise they load them with Ignominious Names, of a Lesbian rule, mere Ink and Paper, and a nose of Wax.* Who will they be try'd by? By a Council truly General? No, except it be called, manag'd and confirm'd by the Pope. Will they be Judg'd by any that differ from them, yet are Men of Good, Honest, and unprejudic't Judgments? No; they are out of the Pale of the Church and Stubborn Hereticks: And the best reason they have for their assurance that they are in the right is, that they are sure they are so, and keep themselves safe in their inchanted Castle of Infallibility. The *Arabian* Philosopher was offended at and abhorr'd their barbarous Doctrine of Transubstantiation, and Eating of their God, and re-

Baron. Tom. 10. p. 256.

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ſolv'd to ſtick to his Philoſophical rather than be of ſuch a Chriſtian Religion. The *Roman* Images and the Worſhip of them have laid a Stumbling Block before the *Jews* who therefore approved our Sentence and Condemnation of them; having therefore ſuch a number of good Teſtimonies and Judgments on our ſide we riſe up and reverence the grey Hairs of our Religion, which *Rome* once Cloth'd in a Wanton and Phantaſtick dreſs, and made it ridiculous, which becauſe we have pull'd off, and put on its Ancient habit and made it look Manly with the Image of God and Chriſt upon it, they call us Innovators. Many of their own Writers have ſpoke in favour of the *Engliſh* Church, and many of their diſtinctions in a fair ſenſe have concluded for her Doctrine and ſhewn their diſlike of many opinions of their own Church.

4. That our Religion was long before *Luther* will appear from the oppoſitions that were made to the Papal corruptions, which did not enjoy ſo quiet a life, but were frequently diſturb'd and cry'd out againſt, not only by other Churches, but by many honeſt and conſidering Men in their own Communion. Men they were, not of Intereſt or Diſcontent, Peeviſhneſs, and given to change, of little Learning and leſs Conſcience, and note in the World, but Men Eminent in their Generation, Men of Probity and Studies, of Temper and Conſideration, Men; that ſtood not alone, but had great numbers of Diſciples, a Viſible Society of Chriſtians who follow'd their Judgments. Some of theſe ſadly bewail'd the degenerate State of the *Roman* Church, others petition'd for, and adviſed not only the correction of the abuſes of good Doctrines and Innocent Inſtitutions, but the reformation of Groſs Errors and Scandalous Additions to the Chriſtian Faith, and others in

great Authority promiſed an amendment, and to reduce the whole frame of Chriſtianity to its Primitive Senſe and Model. And the famous Council of *Trent* was promiſt and begun to rectify Errors and Abuſes crept into the *Romiſh* Faith and Government, yet after a long Sitting it fatally concluded, confirming thoſe corruptions which was hop'd after ſo many complaints and addreſſes with ſtrong reaſons for them, ſhould have been thoroughly redreſt and reform'd. The Original of their Barbarous Inquiſition will be a ſtanding record of the frequent, and ſtout oppoſitions, that were made againſt the *Romiſh* Innovation in the Chriſtian Faith. And ſo long as the Blood of the numerous *Albigenſes* and *Waldenſes* crys to Heaven for Vengance againſt the Papal cruelty, we have a cloud of Witneſſes for this Truth, who reſiſted unto Death the new Doctrines of *Rome*. The carriage of old *Wicliff* and his Followers, tells us plainly in ſtory, that the corruptions of *Rome* had no ſuch quiet poſſeſſion, but ever and anon ſome or other in conſiderable numbers did endeavour to eject them out of their hold, though they paid dear for it. And ſo long as the Treachery of their Council of *Conſtance* about the ſafe conduct granted to poor *Huſs*. And his Diſciples in number above forty thouſand, remains upon record never to be forgotten or forgiven, ſo long we have clear evidences of ſtrong reſiſtance made to the *Romiſh* Religion before the times of *Luther*. And in moſt Countries and times, where and when the *Romiſh* corruptions began from ſmall and obſcure beginnings to be groſs and plain, ſome or other in greater or leſſer numbers began to Renounce and Proteſt againſt them. What though ſome of theſe early Reformers might hold ſome erroneous Opinions which we our ſelves condemn, yet however they oppoſed *the Romiſh* Church in her corruptions and theſe *tended* to a Reformation, which

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was compleated only by degrees, and 'tis no wonder ſome Stumbled in ſuch a night of Ignorance. And have not the Agents of *Rome* deſtroy'd the Papers and Records, diſguiz'd their Adverſaries, and falſify'd their Opinions to ſerve the Power and Intereſt of their great Miſtriſs? They therefore branded the *Waldenſes* with the name of Manichaiſm and that they affirm'd two Principles or Originals of all things, becauſe they aſſerted that the Emperour was Independent of the Pope, and that they deny'd Chriſt to be the Son of God, becauſe they could not believe a cruſt of Bread to be Chriſt. And they have fram'd as lewd ſtories againſt many excellent Men of the later Ages who withſtood the approches of their Doctrine and Government, which we certainly know, and the more Ingenuous among them confeſs, to be Notoriouſly falſe. Though we have reaſon to believe (becauſe of the ſeverity and induſtry of the *Romiſh* Factors ever warm againſt thoſe who oppos'd her practiſes) a great number of Honeſt and Learned Men (as thoſe Ages would afford) are buried in obſcurity and their names unknown, there being an Expurgatorian Index for the merits of ſuch Men as well as Books and Editions, yet we have a ſufficient Catalogue of them who kept up the Title and claim of old Chriſtianity and would not ſuffer their new Errors to plead preſcription.

2. By ſhewing what Errors and Miſtakes are included in the Queſtion.

1. That theſe new Errors of *Rome* are abſolutely neceſſary to the being of a Chriſtian Church: For though we believe all that Chriſt and his Apoſtles taught all things that are contain'd in the Holy Scriptures, all things that undoubted Tradition, or good Reaſon proves to derive themſelves from both or either, yet becauſe we

do

do not Aſſent and Subſcribe to the new Articles of Faith that *Rome* hath invented for us, we ceaſe to be a Chriſtian Church, are markt for Hereticks, which are worſe than Pagans with them, and muſt be certainly Damn'd. Nay ſhould we embrace all the other Doctrines of *Rome*, and deny only the Popes Authority and Supremacy, (that Epitome of their Chriſtianity) it would avail us little, we are Heathens ſtill. Should we reject but one Article of Pope *Pius*'s Creed, ſuppoſe the Doctrine of Purgatory or Merit, yet becauſe this Queſtions Infallibility, the centre of all their Religion, we are in the State of Damnation ſtill: Should we receive their Doctrines as probable and in a larger and more favourable meaning, yet becauſe we do not entertain them as Articles of Faith, in the ſenſe of the Church, our caſe is not mended, we ſhall meet with Fires here and hereafter for our reward. Should we wink and ſwallow them all down with a good Catholick Stomach, yet if the Biſhop of *Rome* ſhould give out a new Edition of Faith, enlarg'd with many more Monſtrous Doctrines and Opinions, yet if we bogle and keck at them, all our former righteouſneſs ſhall not be remembred, we are Apoſtates worſe than *Turks* and *Infidels*; and who can tell what this Infallible and Powerful Guide of Chriſtendom will do? For when things, obſcure, or of an Indifferent Nature, when things wherein they differ among themſelves, and only ſerve a Temporal Intereſt, when Opinions which they can diſpenſe withal upon occaſion, when only the modes and manner of Truth, when contradictories, and Doctrines directly leading unto Impiety, and things Barbarous and Blaſphemous have been Chriſtend Articles of Faith and Fundamentals of Religion, have we not juſt reaſon to ſuſpect as ill or worſe may be done again? And the intrigues of *Trent* may be acted once more, and as many

many new Articles of Faith as Titular Biſhops, by the ſame Spirit moving in the ſame manner; were not the firſt and early Chriſtians ſound Members of Chriſts body though they never thought of ſuch wild Opinions as theſe, and publiſht Truths directly contrary to them? And could I ſuppoſe them to have known theſe Innovations, out of Zeal and Fidelity to their truſt, would have deteſted and abhor'd them. Was Chriſt negligent in the diſcharge of his mighty office, and his Apoſtles defective in their duties and Miniſtry, not to accquaint the firſt Chriſtians with theſe great Truths, and were they reveal'd in the *Tridentine* Council only to us upon whom the ends of the World are come. Theſe Primitive Diſciples of Chriſt thought *themſelves ſecure of Heaven by this ſhort* Creed, *that Jeſus was the Chriſt the ſon of God.* And the contrary was the Character of the Man of Sin, that deny'd that *Jeſus was come in the Fleſh*, that he was the God incarnate and the true *Meſſiah*, and were Scandaliz'd at his meanneſs and obſcurity. St. *Paul* told the *Jaylor that certainly* he would be ſav'd if he believed that *Jeſus was the Chriſt* all other Fundamentals of Chriſtianity one way or other being neceſſarily included in that belief: And thought that he made *ſincere and ſound Diſciples*, *if they* believ'd what he Preacht, *only Jeſus and the Reſurrection*, in their full compaſs and latitude. Though we believe all this in a more expreſs and explicit ſenſe, all that is contain'd in Scripture, in the Apoſtles Creed, or the two other Creeds drawn up by the Church to explain the Chriſtian Religion in ſome Articles, and to oppoſe the Doctrines of Hereticks yet the firſt Chriſtians ſhall be Sav'd and we ſhall be Damn'd, they ſhall be the elect and the Church of God, we muſt be Reprobates and the Synagogue of Satan. Or let *Rome* ſhew her wonted Charity, and ſay She doubts alſo of their Salvation. Or did Chriſt connive at that time

time of Ignorance, or had he as a Lawgiver forgot to declare ſome part of the will and pleaſure of God, and upon better remembrance after ſo many hundred years ſuggeſted it to his careful Vicar? Or did Chriſt knowing their Nature and Circumſtances of it, that they could not bear them at that time, therefore delay the diſcovery ſo long? Or did theſe new Articles lye hid ſo long conceal'd by his Apoſtles, or buried by ſome lewd Hereticks in the rubbiſh of thoſe Churches they pull'd down, but afterwards found, (as they ſay the Croſs was) and now reſtored to light? Or are theſe new Articles ſome way or other contain'd in the Ancient Creeds which we believe, and by eaſy and natural conſequences deduc't from them. Some ſuch fine reaſons as theſe muſt be pretended, otherwiſe we can ſafely conclude that our Church is truly Ancient and Apoſtolical, though She diſowns the late inventions of the *Romiſh* Biſhop and is known to be the Spouſe of Chriſt by her firſt Features and Complexion, though She hath caſt off the new *Italian* dreſs. For, was the Chriſtian Church, the Houſe of God, Irregular in its building, wanting of Beams and Pillars, the Eſſentials of Religion, till *Romes* curious and careful builder caſt it into a new model and compleated it?

2. This Queſtion ſuppoſeth that the Chriſtian Church ought always to be Viſible, which is not ſo ſtrictly true. For Viſible or Inviſible make not two Churches, but different States, Conditions or Reſpects of one and the ſame. 'Twas deſigned by Chriſt, that all that are Baptiz'd into the Communion of his Faith, and Church, ſhould make an Outward and Viſible Profeſſion of it, by their Religious Aſſemblies and Worſhip, by their Sacraments, Diſcipline, and Government, whereby being United among themſelves, and to Chriſt their Head, they ſhould Conſtitute one Body call'd the Catholick-Church,

in

in whoſe Communion they muſt Live and Dye. But ſo it came to paſs, that the number of Chriſtian People ſo profeſſing and owning the Faith of Jeſus, was leſſer or greater, more conſpicuous or obſcure, as Perſecutions or Hereſies grew and prevail'd among them, which like raging Plagues waſted whole Countries, deſtroying ſome, perverting others and making many Fly into remoter Kingdoms, and only ſome Scattered and Solitary Chriſtians living in Caves and Wilderneſſes remain'd behind, or only the Face of a diſtreſſed Chriſtian Church, as it hapned to the ſeven *Aſian* and the *African* Churches, which now labour under a Mahometan Pride and Superſtition: But as it loſt in one Country it gain'd in another, the *Jewiſh* Perſecution and others driving ſeveral Colonies of Chriſtians into remoter Countries, where they ſpread and enlarged their Religion, and many times the diſtreſs or triumph of the Church follow'd the changes and revolutions in the Civil State, ſuffering or flouriſhing with it. And often the abuſe of Religion, Proſtituting of it to Hypocriſy and ſecular ends, the Wicked lives of its Diſciples, or want of courage or reſolution in its defence, hath tempted Providence to permit peſtilent Hereſies (worſe then that in theſe Northen parts) to prevail, and Paganiſm to return again. But ſtill the promiſe of Chriſt to his Church was *firm, and the Gates of Hell did not prevail againſt her.* And though ſhe was forc't ſometimes to Travail from Country to Country, and lookt ſmall and obſcure in the number of her followers, yet ſtill ſome or other parts and corners of the World, and True and Zealous Chriſtians in them made up the little flock, and ſhall never fail while the World endures. Popery like the *Egyptian* darkneſs had overſpread this and other Nations yet here and there was an *Iſraelite* that had light in his dwellings, and a countercharm againſt

the enchantments of *Egypt*, the Goſpel, that at length did prevail againſt corruptions and made its followers Viſible and Numerous. They ask us where was our Religion before *Luther*? As though it was not, becauſe it did not Viſibly appear, or no where in the World, becauſe not here in *England*, or in other parts where Popery did domineer and the *Romiſh Faction was all and whole* Chriſtianity in the World, *the Catholick-Church*, which implies contradiction and abſurdity. Chriſtianity here indeed was obſcur'd, and like the Sun under the cloud, but ſtill the Sun was the ſame, and at length conquer'd the miſts; 'tis a fine Queſtion to ask, Where was the Sun before Noon day? We will ſuppoſe her followers to be few, yet Chriſt is True, though others are Lyars, for he never promiſt that the Members of the True Catholick-Church ſhould be always famous for their numbers, or that multitudes ſhould always follow Truth, nor ever directed Men to follow the multitude in ſearch of Truth, which is found otherways, not by Votes and Polling for her. Did not our Saviour ask the Queſtion, when he ſhould come again, whether at the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* or at the Judgment day, *whereof the other was a Type and Prefiguration, whether he ſhould find Faith on Earth or no*; did not the Prophet ſadly complain in the Reigns *of* Jotham, Ahaz *and* Hezekiah, *Kings of* Judah, *that the good Man is periſhed out of the Land and there is none Righteous among Men; they could not then* reckon up *of the Tribe of* Judah *twelve thouſand*, and yet there was True Faith, and a Church of God, though *little and obſcure. Doth not King* David *cry out, Help Lord for the Godly Man ceaſeth, for the Faithful fail from among the Children of Men*, corruption in Faith and manners uſually going together. And *Elijah tells a ſad Story of the Children of* Iſrael, *that they had broken their Covenant and deſtroy'd the Altars and the Prophets*

Luke. 18. 8.

Micha. 7. 2.

Pſ. 12. 1.

1 Kings. 19. 10.

Prophets and he only was left alive, that they ſought his life alſo, God tells him that yet for all that he had ſeven thouſand Knees that had not bowed to Baal; ſtill there was a ſmall Church not infected with Idolatry, though obſcure and unknown to *Elijah*. Have not ſome of the *Romiſh* Writers told us, that at Chriſts Paſſion the Church was only left in the Virgin *Mary*, all then forſaking Chriſt but the Holy Mother. The Shepherd was Smitten and the Sheep diſperſt. And they further confeſs that in the times of Antichriſt there ſhall be neither Pope, Monk, nor Maſs (if this be all, that Monſter is not ſo Terrible as he is Painted) and their Annaliſts complain of ſuch ſad things as theſe *in the tenth Century*. *And certainly they have read of the Woman in the Wilderneſs, and the Witneſſes Slain, and of Hay and Stubble covering the Foundation*, which deſcribe the deplorable condition of the Chriſtian Church, and Fopperies, Niceties, and Inventions of Men obſcuring the Eſſentials of the Chriſtian Faith. Should a revolt happen (which God divert) from the reformed Church of *England* to *Romaniſm* again, might not others ask them the ſame Queſtion where was your Religion before eighty three, or eighty four, before ſuch a time. Would they not Anſwer at *Rome*, and in *England* alſo, only kept under and obſcur'd by Hereticks and Tyrannical Princes. Ours was alſo here, lockt up in Bibles, own'd by ſome numbers, deſire'd by more, only frighted from a Viſible profeſſion of it, by the torments that did attend it. And Chriſtianity though not ſo Viſible, yet was purer when it, and its profeſſors dwelt in Rocks and Mountains and Dens, places of privacy and obſcurity, in the Reigns of *Nero* and *Dioclefian*, then when ſome Kings were its Nurſing Fathers and Queens its Nurſing Mothers, and took poſſeſſion of the ſeven Hills. And there was a True Church of God though overlay'd and groan-

Ver. 18.

Rev. 12. 6. 11. 7. 1 Cor. 3. 12.

ing under Arrianiſm as before Perſecution, and in *Cyprians* time, as ours once under the Popiſh Yoke. And the Truth of Chriſtianity like the Truth and Eſſence of other things depends not upon ſplendid entertainment or Judgment of others, nor the Church upon the Viſible number of its Members, but it may be a True Church whether Viſible or hid, which this Queſtion denys.

Cypr. Epiſt. p. 59. Ox. Edit. *aſpice totum orbem pene vaſtatum, &c.*

3. This Queſtion ſuppoſeth that the *Roman* Church cannot err but that it remain'd pure and undefiled, as it came from the Hands of Chriſt, through the many Centuries of years, till it came to the times of *Luther*, and from thence ſhall ſo continue till the Worlds end, and therefore we made a falſe charge againſt them of corruptions in their Religion, to excuſe our Innovation. But we have reaſon to conclude She hath foully err'd from the Faith, and that more fatally, and obſtinately, becauſe She pretends She cannot err. For upon what grounds doth She found her Infallibility? Upon the Scriptures? They are only ſo many dead letters, till the breath of the Church doth give them life, and they are then to do the Church a good turn, and give her Infallibility, which is ſuch a circle, as makes Mens brains ſo giddy turning round in it, that they ſcarce know what the Scriptures, and what the Church do mean; the places of Scripture to prove Infallibility are ſuch, which have only reference to the Apoſtles themſelves, their Doctrines or Confeſſions of Faith; as Divine and Infallible, but not to their pretended Succeſſors. Or elſe they are reſtrain'd, not ſimply unto all Truth, but only unto all Truth that is neceſſary to Salvation, in which the Pope or a Council cannot err, while they follow the Spirit of Truth in the Scriptures, and not compel the Spirit and Scriptures to follow them. For they do not irreſiſtibly force the minds of Chriſtians into

Mat. 16. 18. John. 16. 13. Mat. 28. 20.

Truth:

Truth : Or elſe relate only to the Catholick-Church, and not to the particular *Roman*, or elſe are applicable to private Aſſemblies and their Worſhip of God, which no body, but Quakers, and Enthuſiaſts, think to be Infallible. And all the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity and undoubted tradition never in the leaſt imagin'd ſuch an Infallibility as now the Church of *Rome* dreams of. They are at War among themſelves where this Infallibility is lodg'd, either in the Pope alone, or in a General Council alone, or in both together, the Pope Sitting in perſon there or by his Legates, or in the Council confirm'd by the Pope; till they agree among themſelves and prove it better, we ſay 'tis no where plac't but in the Scriptures, and they do not prove any other perſon or perſons upon Earth to be Infallible in their determinations. To ſay ſuch an Infallible Judge of controverſies to guide the Church, is abſolutely neceſſary, and therefore Divine Providence hath plac't him ſome where or other, and who but the Pope can be the Man? Is only to preſcribe methods unto God, and teach him how to Govern his Church, and not be thankful for the good old ways of Salvation and Peace (Scriptures, an honeſt Judgment with Divine aſiſtance and humane means) he hath chalkt out for us, but contrive ſome new ones of their own. Such Infallibility muſt be of no uſe to the Church of God, for upon the *Romiſh* principles, it cannot be known, for the Pope before he be Infallible muſt be Biſhop of *Rome*, but the Sacrament of Order, according to the Council of *Trent*, receives it validity from the intention of the Prieſt, that when he ordain'd him Biſhop, he did what the Church intended, and who can tell upon theſe grounds, what this ſuppoſed Prieſt was, who gave this Order, or dive into his thoughts and intentions, which their

Mat 18. 20.

their Casuists confess may sometimes be very perverse. But if there be this Infallibility at *Rome*, why do not the Countries and Religious Orders in them still under their Dominion receive the Blessed fruits of it, and still all the brawls and squables among themselves, if his Holiness be at leisure, and it be worth his while: And why should not the Champions of *Rome* bend all their Power to prove this main point of Infallibility, when all other controversies would fall under and submit unto its Power, a compendious way to make the Christian World at Peace and Unity with its self. But why need we labour to disprove the Popes Infallibility when themselves put their shoulders to it, and do the work for us, in disputing among themselves, whether the Pope being an Heretick may be deposed, by which Question they confess that he may fall into Heresy, which is error of the highest Nature, carrying Wilfulness and Obstinacy with it. And accordingly these Infallible Men have been guilty of Heresies, as Pope *Honorius* of Monothelitism, and *Liberius* of Arrianism, and the like, and many of them liv'd most debauched lives, as fatal to Christianity as Heresy, and Fallibility, and wherein providence is highly concern'd. This Doctrine of Infallibility looks like a plain contrivance of the *Romish* Church, having some way or other slipt into these gross errors from small beginnings, and finding them not defensible by all the sleights and arts of their cunning heads, are forc't to quit their hold and betake themselves to their common Sanctuary of Infallibility, that let these things be what they will in Dispute between us and them, they are sure they are great Truths by Vertue of Infallibility, which is one of the Miracles of *Rome*, which can change the Nature of things, which may be true in *England* and the quite contrary at *Rome*, as Father *Cotton* and other Jesuites affirm'd

Archbish. Laud against Fisher. 272.

Fowlis Hist. Preface. p. 1.

affirm'd at *Paris*. For it's plain to all impartial Judgments, that their Doctrine of Purgatory, Tranſubſtantiation and the like are not to be found in Scriptures are utterly unkown to the truly Ancient Fathers and the eldeſt and pureſt times of Chriſtianity and contrary to the reaſon of Mankind. They may as well tell us that the City of *Rome* was never ſack't and ſpoyl'd because ſome Flaterers humour'd her Pride and Arrogance calling her the immortal City and impregnable Rock, as that theſe groſs errors never invaded and ruin'd the Chriſtian Faith, becauſe of the fine name of Infallibility, which they arrogate to themſelves. And may as well put out our eyes and then bid us ſee if we can diſcover any errors in the *Romiſh* Church. And St. *Peter*'s being at *Rome* proves no more that he left Infallibility behind him, than Conſecrated Clouts ſent from *Rome* that the Infant that wears them ſhall ever after be a firm defender of the *Romiſh* Faith.

Urbs æterna & immobile ſaxum Grot. in Apoc. c. 17.

4. This Queſtion will ſerve any Hereſies or Errors that have got ſome Antiquity on their ſide againſt a Reformation. If it be true in this caſe, 'tis ſo in all others, and then what a ſhelter have they provided for all Hereſies, if they chance to live long, to be ſafe and ſecure in, and eſcape correction. And there are many errors contemporary with Chriſtianity it ſelf in its firſt plantation in the World, at leaſt followed it very cloſe at the heels, ſuch were the Ancient Gnoſticks, the Carpocratians or Ebionites, the ſpawn of *Magus* and others, who can plead great Antiquity on their ſide, and as properly ask any Reformer of their Hereſies, where was his Religion before ſuch a time, as the inconſtant World began to favour his new Faith and Innovation. And ſo errors once ſuperinduc't upon the Truth, will become by Age Truth it ſelf, and are never to be mended for fear of this pert Queſtion, and charge of Innovation.

on. And it's plain, that new and old are but uncertain Characters to Judge of Truth and falſhood by, there being ſometimes a new Truth that is, lately diſcover'd to be ſo, but really old, and an old error kept up a long time by Force or Art, and Walking in the Garb of Truth, but truly new, having come in after the Truth it vies with: Time like a River many times bringing down ſtraw and traſh, and leaving weighter things behind, which when they come to be retriev'd are call'd new Faſhions and Inventions. When *Abraham* reſtored the true Worſhip of God, and ſtript it of Idolatry and Superſtition, the *Chaldean* Prieſts, whoſe Power and Intereſt was ſhaken by it, were *very briſk and ready* to charge this Pious and Mighty *Man from the Eaſt* with Novelty and Singularity in his Religion, the falſe ſervice of God in theſe Countries being then ancient and almoſt Univerſal, though the *Patriarchs* Religion did derive it ſelf from a very ancient ſtock that of *Adams* in Paradiſe, kept up by an *Enoch* and a *Noah in ſingle* Families when *all Fleſh had corrupted their ways*, and now deliver'd unto *Abraham*, and now all the ſticklers for a falſe Religion began to upbraid the Sons and Followers of *Abraham's* Faith with Novelty, and aſk them where was your Religion before the times of *Abraham*; who ſet up his, but yeſterday, and Scorns and Uncharitably Damns all his Forefathers, who of old liv'd beyond the River in our Religion. The ſame Objection might have been caſt in the teeth of *Moſes*, when he was ſetling a Religion deliver'd to him by God, in oppoſition to the Idolatries and falſe Devotions of the World, and to ſerve his further deſigns of providence, that he affected Novelty and Singularity, that all the World ſtood againſt him in this, and one *of his Diſciples afterwards was Inhumane and Uncharitable in praying God to pour out his Indignation upon the Heathen*

Iſaiah. 41. 2.

Gen. 6. 11.

Pſalm. 79. 6.

who

who had not known his Laws. And his Succeſſor *Joſhua* might have met with the ſame fare, when he bids his People chooſe whom they will ſerve, either the Gods beyond the Flood, and in *Egypt*, or the Gods of the *Amorites*, Old and great Nations, who might have had this Objection in its full ſtrength on their ſide, or the God of *Abraham*, and ſtoutly tells them, let that plauſible argument weigh with them what it will, as for himſelf and his Family they would ſerve the Lord. And as this Religion might degenerate in deſcending Ages, ſo any reſtorer of it might be ſet upon by the ſame frivolous Objection, and ſo it happned to our *Meſſias* (and his fore-runner who was to reſtore all things) who when he began to reform the falſe gloſſes, and corrupt ſenſes, which the Scribes and Phariſees had put upon the Law of *Moſes*, and cry down their Traditions which made the Commands of God of none effect, was lookt upon as an Enemy to *Moſes*, a Blaſphemer of the Law, a Prophaner of the Temple, and a Changer of all their Religion, whoſe deſign was only to fill up their *Law, and reſtore it to its Natural* Beauty and Perfection, and *before Abraham was, I am*, not only in his Divine Nature, and deſignation to his office, but in his Religion alſo, which now he was *going to* *teach the Jew* and *Gentile* too. And now the times *of a general Reformation* being come, and the Apoſtles were Preaching this excellent Religion unto all the World, *Jew* and *Gentile conſpire together in the ſame Language, and call them ſetters forth of ſtrange Gods and new Hereſies, Heads and Contrivers of new Sects, and ways, and are whipt for Vagrants and Impoſtors*, who would cheat the World out of their old paternal Religions, that were entail'd upon them, teach them to ſpeak ill of the Gods of their Fathers, and Predeceſſors, and to think they all dyed in a falſe Religion, and to embrace a new-

Joſh. 24. 15.

Heb. 9. 10.

Acts. 24. 14. Acts. 28. 22.

fangled *Faith of a few illiterate* and rambling fellows who had *turn'd the World upside down.* And had this argument prevail'd then, as much as the *Romaniſts* do deſire, it ſhould now, we ſhould have had no Chriſtianity among us, the Idol-Gods of our Anceſtors in this Iſland, their Woodens and Twiſters would have preſcribed againſt Chriſt himſelf.

3. To turn the Queſtion upon them and ask them ſome others of the like Nature. Men that are inſolent, and ever boaſting of the Antiquity of their Family, and upbraiding others with their obſcure Birth, and extraction, do many times meet with ſome croſs Queſtions about the Head and Fountain of their Families, which many times proves only to be a Shepherd, or meaner Original, made Glorious with arrogant Titles and borow'd Names. Searching into the pedigree of *Romes* Religion, we do not find Chriſt or St. *Peter* or any of his Apoſtles to be the Authors of it, but Pride, Intereſt, and Deſign, old Vices indeed but new Fathers of a Chriſtian Church, which brought in a late and new generation of opinions, and additions to Chriſts Religion, Clothing them with the venerable Names of Primitive and *Apoſtolical. Where was* the *Romiſh* Religion before the *Council of Trent* concluded only about the year 1563. of a later date then when *Luther* firſt began, which Legitimated all their Innovations, the Iſſue of Scholaſtick Wranglings, pretended Dreams, and Viſions, Forc't, and Unnatural. Senſes of Scripture, Ambition and Profit, the Exchequer of *Rome*, to be made Sons of the Church and Fundamentals of the Chriſtian Faith. Many of their own Writers confeſs, that for 1400. or 1500. years, the Pope was not believ'd to be Infallible, till of late ſome of their flaming Zealots have inveſted him with Infallibility, whereby the *Roman* Church is ſick unto Death, and no cure is

to

to be apply'd, becauſe She is ſo certain and ſure that She is well. Their lewd Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, was not made an Article of Faith, till the Council of *Lateran* under *Innocent* the Third, above 1200 years after Chriſt, and many of their own *Writers are ſtill* diſſatisfied about it. The Title of *Univerſal Biſhop* was obtain'd by Pope *Boniface* the Third, not till about 600 years after Chriſt, fearing a powerful Rival the *Conſtantinopolitan* Biſhop, who affected the ſame, and therefore by the Popes themſelves was declaim'd againſt, as Proud and Antichriſtian, but now by Hypocriſie and baſe complyance with the Wicked *Phocas*, who was Guilty of Treaſon, and Murder, againſt the Emperour *Mauritius*, *Rome* gain'd the delicious point, and has made it a Fundamental Article of her new Religion: Though the Popes came not up to their Swaggering Temper and Power of Hectoring Chriſtian Princes ſome hundreds of years afterwards. The Doctrine of Purgatory, which ſome derive from the Platonick Fancies of *Origen*, the Montaniſm of *Tertullian*, pretended Viſions, and Pagan Stories, Rhetorical Flouriſhes and doubtful expreſſions of the later Fathers, yet it was not poſitively affirm'd till about the year 1140. and not made an Article of Faith, till the Council of *Trent*, then indeed a good eſtate became a ſurer way to Heaven, then a good Life and Converſation. The uſe of Indulgences was the Moral to the Fable of Purgatory, and began to grow much what about the ſame time, though it came not to the height and perfection till Pope *Leo* the Tenths time, when *Luther* ſo ſtoutly oppoſed them, then Heaven was ſet to Sale, and the beſt Chap-Man was the greateſt Saint, though they boaſt of the ſecond Council of *Nice* for the Antiquity of their Image Worſhip. (And if it will do them any good ſo they may of *Simon Magus*, who was of an elder date, and a very fit

Patron of such an Opinion) yet the Council of *Frankfurt* condemn'd it, and the purest times did not so much as allow the making of Images. And it was not the Catholick Doctrine in *France*, for almost 900. years after Christ, nor in *Germany* till after the twelfth Century, then indeed such a Doctrin might be very proper, when true Religion was turn'd into Pageantry, and a form of Godliness. The number of the seven Sacraments is now an Article of the *Romish* Faith, yet the Council of *Florence* ended in the year 1439. was the first Council, and *Peter Lombard* the first Man, that precisely fixt that number. That the Laity ought to receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper only in one kind was never made an Article of Faith till the Council of *Constance* concluded in the year 1418. then indeed that Council with the greatest insolence, and a direct Invasion of the Authority of Christ took the Cup from the Lay Mens mouths, notwithstanding (as 'twas then acknowledg'd) the Institution of Christ to the contrary, and they may as well Christen the Laicks Children only in the name of the Holy Ghost leaving out the Father and the Son by the way of concomitancy, it being as Lawful to Baptize as to Communicate by the halfs. For what cannot such a pretended Power do.

The prohibiting of Priests to *Marry* was not in perfection, as 'tis now, till Pope *Gregory* the Sevenths time. Let them tell us where 'tis said by Christ, or his Apostles, or any of the truly Ancient Writers of the Christian Church, that Pennance is a Sacrament, or that Auricular Confession is necessary to Salvation, or that Prayers ought to be made in an unknown Tongue, or that good works are strictly meritorious, or where can they find the many Impieties and Absurdities of their Mass in those early times of Antiquity. And since they are fond of

asking

asking us this Queſtion, we might ask them many more, about the many Fopperies and Innovations in their Faith and Devotion, and many they are, and large is the invntory, almoſt as many as are the Chriſtian Truths in direct oppoſition to them, or prevarication from them: But they ſeem to confeſs the newneſs of their Religion, when they arrogantly ſet up a Power in their Church, to frame new Articles of Faith, and many things, only Opinions and Notions at firſt, have grown up by degrees to Fundamental Truths, and having once ſlipt into error, they are bound to maintain it, for the Reputation and Authority of Holy Church. And who knows how many of this Nature are upon the *Romiſh* forge, ready to be put into their Creed, and where muſt we end; not till it be believ'd, that conſecrated Feathers and Holy Water, can conveigh Divine Grace to us, and drive away Wicked Spirits, and the Weathercocks of our Churches be thought Pillars of it. Would the Champions of *Rome ſpeak out*, *they would* tell us, as their *Eckius* did the *Duke of Bavaria*, that the Doctrine of *Luther* might be overthrown by the Fathers, though not by the Scriptures; 'tis a plain *confeſſion that we have the trueſt* Antiquity on our ſide, *and in the beginning it was not ſo.* But we add, that we have the *Fathers alſo on our ſide*, *for otherwiſe* what mean their *Expurgatorian indices* of the Fathers, and other Ancient Writers, but that they very well know, that theſe are old Enemies to Pope *Pius's* new Creed, and the Truth in them confounds their error. Such an account as this, about the Original and Progreſs of their new additions to the old Faith was convenient to be given, not becauſe the Nature of the thing did neceſſarily require it, for it had been ſufficient only to have prov'd, that theſe *Romiſh* additions to the Chriſtian Faith, are contrary to the Word of God, and no where to be found in any of the

Divine

Divine Writings, the only Infallible Rule of Faith, and that they have no power of minting new Articles Fundamental to Salvation; but becauſe the Diſciples of *Rome* ſo frequently ask us the Queſtion, and lay ſo much ſtreſs upon it, if theſe are Innovations crept into their Church, who was the firſt Author of them, when did he begin, in whoſe Reign and in what place did he live, who did oppoſe him, what company believ'd on him, and what his new Opinions were, as they inſtance in Arianiſm and other Hereſies, and becauſe they Fancy, we cannot make all theſe particulars ſo abſolutely plain, therefore they ſay we have falſly charg'd the *Romiſh* Church with new errors, and that their Faith is truly Ancient and by an uninterrupted Succeſſion of Infallible Biſhops hath been conveigh'd down from Chriſt and his Apoſtles in its full purity to this preſent Age. To ſatisfy their curioſity, the defenders of the reformation have done this, but ſuppoſe they could not have been ſo particular, about the birth of theſe new errors, or had made ſome miſtakes in the compaſs of time, yet however the charge of Innovation againſt the *Romiſh* Church ſtands firm and good upon theſe accounts.

Bellar Tom. 2. p. 286.

1. That Reformation carries not ſo much a reſpect to the error, when it began, as to the error it ſelf. Not whether it be ſooner, or later, but whether it be an error, contrary to the True Chriſtian Faith. It may ſerve ſome honeſt purpoſes, to know, the who, and the when, the where, and the how, and other circumſtances of its beginning, and proceeding, but the neceſſity of Reformation ſprings from the Nature of the error, which came from the Invention of Men, and not the Authority of Chriſt. And matters not much, whether *Simon Magus*, who was contemporary with the Apoſtles, was the firſt Author of it, or Pope *Hildebrand* at ſo great

great a diſtance. 'Tis enough, that we are certain, and ſure, that the Popiſh Doctrins, which we condemn, by comparing them with the Scriptures, are not Chriſt and his Apoſtles, have none of their Images or Superſcriptions upon them, who only had full Authority to make them current, and True Articles of Faith. They have indeed Chriſtianity among them, but like *Joſephs* Coat, ſo dipt in Blood, ſo over-lac't with Fopperies, and undecent Ceremonies, and ſo many new pieces ſtitcht to the old Cloth, that the old Fathers, if alive, would ſcarce know it to be the True *Joſeph's*, and would not trouble themſelves ſo much, to ask the time, when this came to paſs, as lament the ſadneſs of the change. And the Apoſtles did not take ſo much care to tell the punctual time to the Diſciples, when Antichriſt ſhould diſcover himſelf, as to make them ſtand vpon their guard to defend that Faith, which he would invade, where and whenſoever he ſhould come, or whoſoever he was.

2. The difficulty of knowing the preciſe, and punctual times when errors firſt began. In many ſorts of changes or Innovations, 'tis hard to know the nice time of their beginning, but ſome latitude of Judging is allow'd, and why not in things eſpecially relating to Religion. Are there not wild Opinions left upon Record among the Pagan Writers, whoſe Authors are either unknown, or which are falſly Father'd upon others, and as hard to be known as the head of *Nile*. Can the niceſt *Romaniſt* tell us, what *Rabbi*; and in what Place and Age, firſt ſuperinduc't the ſeveral falſe gloſſes and ſenſes to the Law of *Moſes*, yet our Saviour (though he knew *them well*) *thought it ſufficient* to tell them, that in the beginning *it was not ſo*, and by comparing the *Moſaick* Religion, it plainly appears they were new additions to the good old way. And how many errors

ſprung

ſprung up in the times of Chriſtianity, of whoſe original and other circumſtances both the *Romaniſts* and our ſelves are yet uncertain. And how many things of this Nature more near our own times, are we puzled about, and the difficulty of knowing them ariſeth principally from this twofold account.

1. From the ſubtilty of the contrivers of errors: Which many times are the cunning, and the Wiſe in their Generation, which the neceſſity of their cauſe requires; Truth being ſtrong, and error naturally weak, and that Sly Deceiving Spirit lends it his utmoſt aſſiſtance to ſerve the deſign. Such Men know how to diſguiſe new falſhoods, in the old habits of Truth, to make them look Ancient, and Venerable, they feel, and know the temper of the Age, and fit their Opinions to the Intereſt and Pleaſure of it. They prepare their errors to be received by degrees, and one part muſt draw on the other, and the whole muſt be inſenſibly ſwallow'd down. So it hapned in the Adoration and Invocation of Saints and Images, and the whole Structure of the *Romiſh* Religion, which by ſeveral ſteps and in many Ages advanc't to its mighty bulk. The cunning knew the conſequences of their own poſitions, how far they would reach, which the Vulgar eye diſcern'd not; they well foreſaw how their Hey and Stubble, variety of Phraſes, and changes of Syllables, would at length fire the Foundation of Religion, yet being invented at firſt by the Angelical Doctors, and leaders of an Age, for fame and reputation ſake, they and their followers firſt defended them for bare Truths, afterwards for Sacred and Fundamental ones; and things at firſt only Piouſly believ'd, ſoon after have been adopted into a Creed. And Men of raſhneſs and Superſtition only great in Place and Office, have vented opinions whoſe fatal concluſions

cluſions they at firſt, we hope, did not know, yet the Cunning many times have hatcht what they left, and improv'd it fatally to Religion; the greatneſs of the Man whether an *Innocent* or an *Hildebrand* gave the error its firſt reputation, and the cunning of others its Strength and Argument. Many of the great and knowing heads of the World being corrupted unto the *Roman* ſide, to defend thoſe errors, which had got footing in the Church. But how can we unlock the ſecret methods of *Rome*, or deſcribe the ways and Policies by which the Myſtery of Iniquity works? Yet we are ſure it's carri'd on, by the windings and turnings of the Serpent, and Men that he imploys upon deſign to ruine truth, for when the Apoſtle deſcribes the ſad Apoſtacies and Defections from the Faith, *they are ſaid to be wrought by Men* of Skill and Art *who lye in wait to deceive.* Eph. 4. 14.

2. From the Paſſions and Infirmities of other Men. Theſe give the falſe and buſy deceiver an eaſy Victory. When Opinions are ſo contriv'd as to ſerve the deſigns of Pride, and Covetouſneſs, Ambition and Luſt, and other Vices, they eaſily paſs for mighty Truths, their Original is not enquir'd into, the Judgment is brib'd, and they bear the Title of Ancient and Primitive, or what the Deceiver pleaſeth: For theſe Paſſions, have effeminated the mind, made it ſoft and ſluggiſh, and any bold error ſhall ſlip down, rather than be at the charge of a further ſearch and enquiry to know whether theſe things be ſo or no. The *Roman* Religion being ſo well cut out in its different Doctrines, to hit Mens Vices and Paſſions, Gayety or Melancholy, Enthuſiaſm or Fury, Power or Deſign, it's no wonder, it did prevail in a ſly and ſilent *manner, intereſt having put out* their Eyes, this *Kingdom came not with obſervation*, and the approaches of the Enemy in the Night of Ignorance, *viz.*

the darkneſs that could be felt of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh, Century, when all good Learning and Manners too were faſt aſleep, the time when many of the new Devices of *Rome* were hammering out, and the noiſe not heard, were not diſcover'd, till they had taken Poſſeſſion, and then by virtue of Power and great Names defended their title. And their own Writers confeſs, that many of the great Guardians of Faith, the Popes of *Rome*, were very Vicious and Illiterate Perſons, whoſe Vice and Ignorance kept them nodding, while the little Thieves, the Notions, and Speculations of Men of Wit and Intereſt ſet open the Churches doors for the greater errors to come crowding in. Our Mat. 13. 24, 25. Saviour confirms the Truth of this when he compares his Church to a Field, which had been ſown by him, and his Apoſtles, with very good ſeed, Wheat or ſome other Grain, but while Men ſlept, when Chriſtians were grown Wicked and Careleſs, Ignorant or Factious comes the Enemy, and ſcatters the Tares, and a new Harveſt of Weeds, Heretical Doctrines, Superſtitious Practices, Foppiſh and Phantaſtick rites over-ran and choakt the purer Grain. And the Apoſtle tells his *Diſ-*
Jude. 4. *ciples that Men of dangerous principles abuſing the Grace of God, ſpeaking Evil of Dignities and deſpiſing Dominions, and denying Chriſt that bought them, had crept in unawares*, being well diſguiz'd with Fine Names and Pretences, while good Men were careleſs and ſleepy. And when moſt begin to broach new Errors, and ſpread their Inventions for mighty Truths, they do it with all the skill and artifice that ſo bad a deſign can poſſibly require. Error and Innovation neceſſarily calling for the utmoſt Cunning, and Slyneſs to its aid and aſſiſtance. Religion therefore may eaſily ſuffer a conſiderable change, yet good Men know not how, neither the time nor Authors of it.

It being therefore only abſolutely neceſſary for us to know, that whenſoever and howſoever, theſe errors in the Church firſt ſprung up, that they were contrary to the Primitive Faith of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and therefore were to be amended and weeded up notwithſtanding the common queſtion where was our Harveſt of Wheat, before the Weeders, our Reformers came, for the Church of *England* finding old Chriſtianity ſtrangely over-grown with the new Doctrines and Creeds of *Rome*, contrary to the Offices of Chriſt, the deſign of his undertaking for Mankind, and the True Spirit of his Religion, it became a Duty, as much as they lov'd their Souls, and would be True and Loyal unto Chriſt, to ſhake off theſe New and Sinful Impoſitions, and reſtore True and Primitive Chriſtianity. Had our differences with *Rome* conſiſted only in things leſs fit, and proper, uſed by them in their Religious offices, or in Rituals or Geſtures not ſo decent, they might have had ſome pretence to roar againſt us, for breaking off Communion with her, but when they Plow up the very Foundation, as one of her Pagan Captains did the Walls of *Jeruſalems* Temple, and lay all waſte before them, their new additions Eating out the very Heart of old Religion, to thunder out Damnation againſt us, becauſe we renounce her Communion in this, is to add Uncharitableneſs and other groſs Vices to their former Sin, as though they could not preſerve Chriſtianity, but by defacing of it more. Our Prince being conſtituted by God a Nurſing Father of the Church, and our Biſhops in their Epiſcopal Power being coordinate with him of *Rome*, or any other in the Chriſtian World, ought under the penalty of Damnation, and did accordingly, Reform the *Romiſh* Corruptions, which had tainted the Vitals of Chriſtianity an indiſpenſable Duty it *was* to preſerve the Primi-

2 Cor. 11. 2. tive Faith, *like a chaſt Virgin*, and not ſuffer it to be longer proſtituted to the Deſigns and Paſſions of Men by a Solemn Vow; and our Souls were at ſtake, we had engag'd to preſerve it pure and undefil'd, and therefore with all juſt and proper *ways and methods*, we were bound earneſtly to *contend for it*. In Duty therefore to our Lord and Maſters Command, at ſuch a time we began our reformation, but wiſh that it had been promoted and compleated many years before, though the ſame Queſtion would have been as fitly asked then, or any other time, except they think that errors muſt be immortal, and the Gates of Heaven ſhall not prevail againſt them. The Goodneſs and Wiſdom of our Reformation, would be readily acknowledg'd and imitated, did not Fame and Ambition, Power and Secular Intereſt, infect the Eye, and change the Natural ſhape and colour of things and 'tis a ſign the cauſe of *Rome* wants ſtrength, when ſuch a trifling, only popular, Objection againſt our Reformation is made ſo powerful to preſerve their Diſciples in their Communion, and amuſe our own. And we need ſay no more againſt it, but this, and 'tis no *Roman* Uncharitableneſs and rigor. That if *Rome* notwithſtanding all the clear evidence againſt her new and upſtart opinions, ſhall obſtinately defend them, and contemn a Wiſe and Pious Reformation, let her ſuffer the juſt puniſhment of her wilful errors. He that will preſer an Old Diſeaſe, before a New Cure, let him be for ever Sick. For we have Healed *Babylon* and She was not Healed.

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